

Congressman Ron Kind  
Statement on H. Con. Res. 212  
July 21, 2003

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 212, offered by my friend and colleague, Representative Sam Johnson.

This resolution properly recognizes the service sacrifice of the 22 nations, thousands of American service members, and millions of South Korean citizens who stood together half a century ago in defense of the principle of freedom.

The Korean Conflict is often referred to as the Forgotten War. Yet, this war is only “forgotten” by those who have not been blessed with the teachings of history – not by the millions of Americans whose lives have been touched in so many ways by those committed to opposing tyranny and injustice, regardless of the sacrifices required.

America entered the Korean War with a military made up of a mix of war-scarred servicemen and women toughened by the hard lessons of Guadalcanal, Okinawa and Normandy, as well as a new generation of soldiers and sailors who had only seen war on the silver screen, and a newly created Air Force.

After three long, bloody years, the fighting ended. We had rebuilt a military that became, even by today’s standards, one of the most coherent fighting forces in the world. The alliance, consisting of units from 22 nations, supported an armistice that prevented the potential death of millions more in a savage, spreading war, and permitted South Korea to flourish into a miracle of freedom that we witness today.

Tragically, nearly 37,000 American soldiers fell on the fields of battle and lost their lives in the Korean War.

There were also far too many who were taken prisoner or met an unknown fate, whose ranks of over 8,000 remain today unaccounted for, but never forgotten. Indeed today, this nation continues to search for every missing warrior who fought to preserve the freedom we cherish; we seek and demand the fullest possible accounting of America’s fallen heroes.

It is our solemn promise that we will never forget or forsake them.

Nor will we forget the veterans who returned home to help reshape this nation and the world. And while some returned to parades and fanfare, many returned quietly without public recognition and the “thanks” they deserved.

On July 27, 2003, our nation will commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the armistice with North Korea – giving us the opportunity to reaffirm our appreciation and extend the gratitude some soldiers never received. Many Americans, including the thousands of veterans and their families from that war, will take a moment to remember the meaning of their service: whether they rest in Korea, remain unaccounted for, or have returned home to their families and the freedom they fought to defend.

More than 1.5 million Americans served during the Korean War. Today, Americans are still there on-point, still defending freedom in Korea. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines serve alongside their South Korean counterparts, astride what has been called the world's most dangerous border.

We pause today to recall with gratitude the sacrifices of all veterans who have served the causes of democracy and freedom. To the veterans of the Korean War and their families, we especially offer our thanks. The world could be a significantly less friendly place if you had not stepped forward selflessly when you were needed. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, from Korea to Iraq, let's not forget the sacrifices our men and women in uniform, and indeed their families have made on behalf of this great country.

Remember too, that on any given day, there are Americans on guard, demonstrating and defending democracy and freedom in over 100 countries around the world.

God bless our service members, our veterans and their families.

God bless America.